

LONE WOLF AND CUB

子連水狼

VOLUME 27

BATTLE'S EVE

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



子連水狼

LONE WOLF AND CUB



story
KAZUO KOIKE
art
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27

A NOTE TO READERS

Lone Wolf and Cub is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

LONE WOLF AND CUB



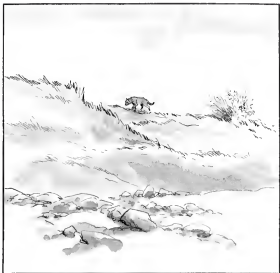
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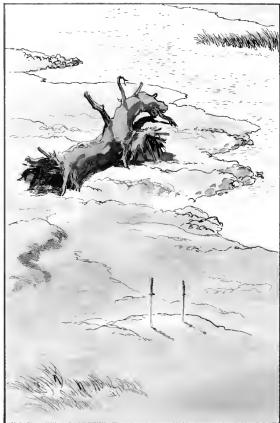
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*the hundred and
thirty-third*

To Protect And Defend





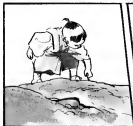


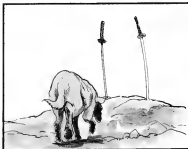




























HURT SO...
YOU REALLY
AGAIN IT?



GUESS
THERE'S SOME
REASON...

THEY SAY
SAMURAI STICK
THEIR SWORDS IN
THE GROUND WHEN
THEY POSTPONE A
FIGHT, KIND OF A
PROMISE...









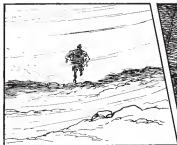






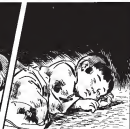








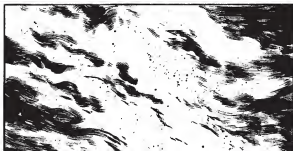


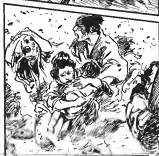




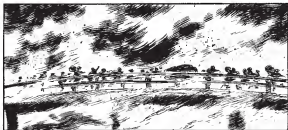


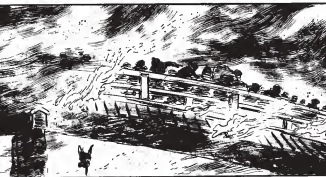












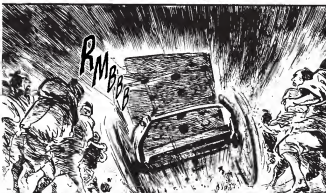


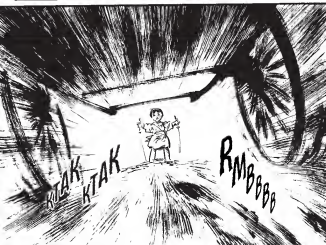














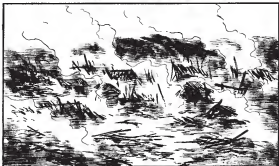






















DOUBT-
NO-
HANSHECH,
MADO-YAKI
MAKER.

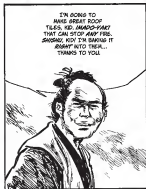
OGAMI
ITTO, KID
DARKFOOT



OGAMI-
SAMA...THE
KASHIMADAMMY



I AM
HON-
ORED!



I'M GOING TO
MAKE GREAT ROOF
TILES, KID, MADO-YAKI
THAT CAN STOP ANY FIRE.
SASAKI, KID I'M BAKING IT
RIGHT INTO THEM...
THANKS TO YOU



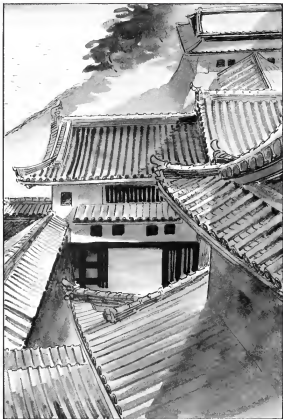


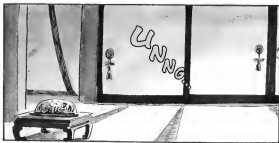


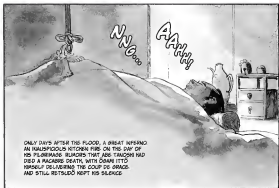
*the hundred and
thirty-fourth*

For Whom To Die

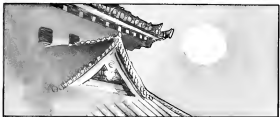
















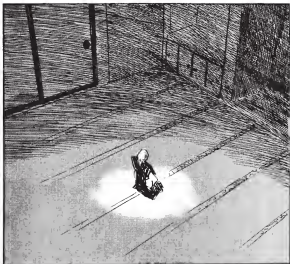
WHAT'S THAT ROOM?

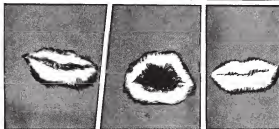
MY LORD...
IT'S RETSUJÔ-
KAMI'S
CHAMBERS.



RETSUJÔ,
HAY?







"STRATEGY...
SUCCESSFUL.

"NOW WALKING
IN GARDEN.

"GRANDPA SAYS...
KEEP SHADOW AWAY...
AGITATED...





MAYBE TANAKA
WAS RIGHT. MAYBE
I'LL NEVER LEARN
THE TRUTH UNLESS
I PUT HIM AGAINST
OGAMI ITTÔ.



OGAMI...
THAT WHOLE
SITUATION
DOESN'T FIT
RIGHT...

I LET
RETSUGO
RUN HIS WAY
FOUR YEARS AGO,
BUT... MAYBE I
SHOULD HAVE
INTERFERED.





THEN THE
FEED ALL THE NATION
GOSSIPS ABOUT WOULD
NEVER HAVE HAPPENED.
BUT HOW TO FIND THE
TRUTH BEHIND
IT NOW...?



PERHAPS
HAVE I
LEFT TOO
MUCH TO
THE YAMATO



I THOUGHT
THEY *SERVED*
ME. AM I TOO
TRUSTING?



THE
MACHU-
KADO,
MY LORD

HE'S FOUND
OMORI. HIS MEN
ARE TALKING
EVEN NIGHT
AND DAY.

I
LEFT
THAT TO
ADE.



HAD HE
DEFIED ME,
TOO...

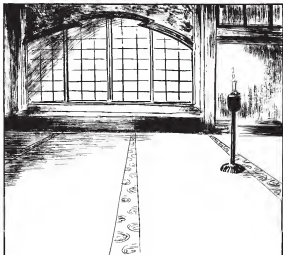






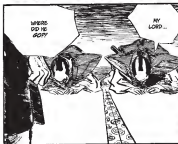








WHERE'S
RETSUPOPI?



WHERE
DID HE
GO??

MY
LORD...



SPEAK!
YOU'RE HIS
GUARDS!



HE IS AT THE
WELL BY THE
NAGAYA GATE,
MY LORD.

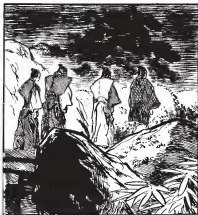
WHAT'S
HE DOING
THERE??













THOUGH IT
DESTROY ME,
LET ME
BUILD A FIRM
FOUNDATION!

MY OWN FATE
MEANS NOTHING!
LET ME PROTECT
THE TOKUGAWA!



KCHAK
KCHAK
KCHAK
KCHAK

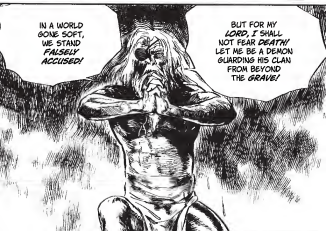


WE'VE GUARDED
THE RYUEI FOR
GENERATIONS!



IN A WORLD
GONE SOFT,
WE STAND
FALSELY
ACCUSED!

BUT FOR MY
LORD, I SHALL
NOT FEAR DEATH!
LET ME BE A DEMON
GUARDING HIS CLAN
FROM BEYOND
THE GRAVE!







FORGIVE ME,
MY LIEGE. FORGIVE
ME FOR LURING
YOU HERE WITH
TRICKERY.



YET I SPOKE
THE TRUTH WITHOUT
THE MASK. THERE
IS NO FORDHAM.
I KNOW IT BY
MY SCARS.



AS THE
TOKUJIMA GO,
SO GO THE
YAYU. PLEASE
UNDERSTAND.

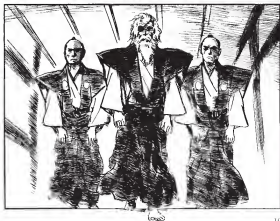
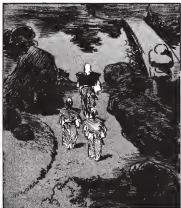


WAS IT TRUE REALITY
OR UNBIDDED CONFIDENCE?
EITHER WAY, HIS STRATAGEMS
SUCCESSFUL, THE OLD TIGER
RETURNED TO THE PRAY.

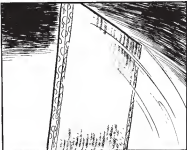


I RETURN
HOME!
TOMORROW!















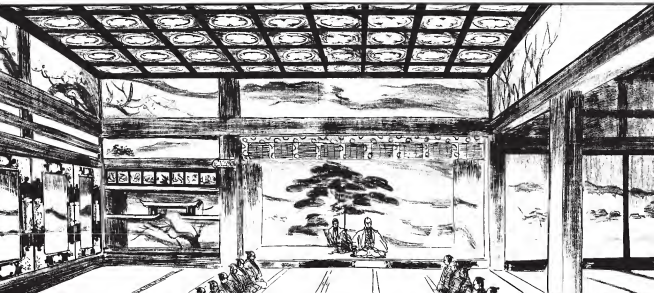








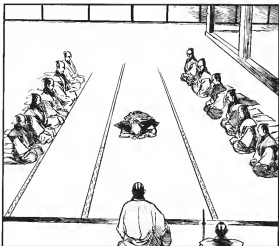






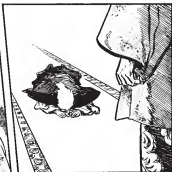


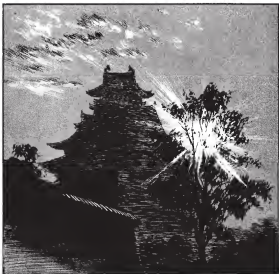




















*the hundred and
thirty-fifth*

**Way
of
the
Wazzioz,
Way
of
Man**







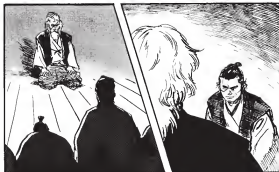








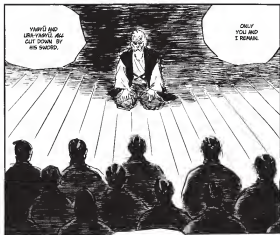












YABUJI AND
URA-YABUJI ARE
CUT DOWN BY
HIS SWORD.

ONLY
YOU AND
I REMAIN.



BEFORE
SURMOUNTING YOU
I CHALLENGED HIM
TO BATTLE...





ZAMU HAS
NO FEEL...
AND AME
DRAWS ME
DOWN

NO SHARD,
BEYOND
COMPASS



A SHAME
TO TAKE SUCH
A LIFE

AND
YET...



WE MUST
BURY HIM! WE
MUST RE-PLANT
THE GREAT TREE
OF THE YAMU
FOR ALL TIME!

WE LIVE THROUGH
THE TORUKANA. THE
TORUKANA LIVE THROUGH US.
RESTORING THE WAY OF THE
YAMU RESTORES THE WAY OF
THE TORUKANA. AND THE WAY OF
THE TORUKANA IS THE WAY
OF SANDO ITSELF!









YOU JUST
PRaised HIM
AS POWERLESS
IN THE WRYS
OF SANDO

I FEAR
LEST WE WASH
OUR O-YAKITA-
SAMA'S NAME

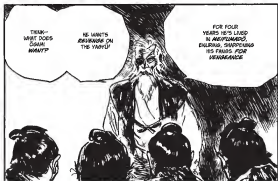


YES, IT IS
OUR DUTY TO
WATCH FOR THE
KAWA TO PROBE,
WE SHALL USE ANY
REMS, COMBOLD
OR NO

AND
YET... WHEN OUR
O-YAKITA-SAMA HAS
MADE A VOW, AND PRaises
HIS FOR, I AM TROUBLED.
HOW ARE WE TO
FIGHT?

MUST
WE KISS
OURSELVES? CAN
WE STILL USE
ARMOR?

I ASK
FOR THE
HONOR OF OUR
MASTER'S
NAME.





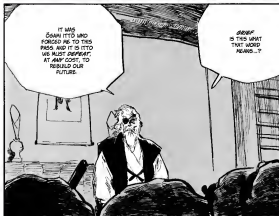


NO WOUND
COULD HURT US
MORE THAN THE
UPRODING OF
THE BRASS.

HOW MANY
YEARS WILL
IT TAKE TO
REPLANT
YOU?



SO
MANY...
....



IT WAS
BRASS INTO WHO
FORCED ME TO THIS
PASS, AND IT IS INTO
WE MUST DEFEND,
AT ANY COST, TO
REBUILD OUR
FUTURE.

DEFEND
IS THIS WHAT
THAT WORD
MEANS...?



YOU AND I
ARE DONE. IF YOU
ATTACK, ITTÔ WILL
CALL IT JAPPO. IT'S
WHAT HE MOST
FEARS.

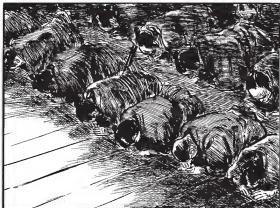


HE CAN KILL ME,
BUT WHILE YOU REMAIN,
THE YAMATO WILL SURVIVE.
SLAY US BOTH, AND WE
PERISH FOREVER.



KILL ITTÔ!
WHATEVER
IT TAKES!

UNDERSTAND?!



BEFORE YOU GO
FORTH TO BATTLE,
PRAY FOR THOSE WHO
DIED ON THE WAY

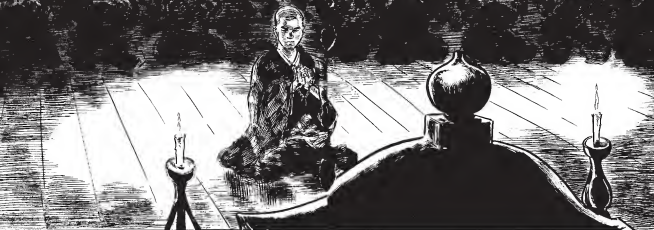




HOW RAMPAGE
DECEIT WHEN THE
WARRIOR TURNS HIS
BACK ON FEALTY.

HOW PAINFUL DECEIT
WHEN THE WARRIOR

URNS HIS BACK
ON FEALTY.







THE
SHINOBI'S
PATH IS FULL
OF PAIN

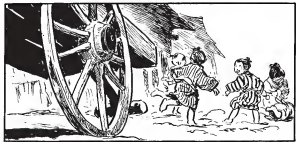
BUT
IT IS THE
PATH OF THE
WARRIOR

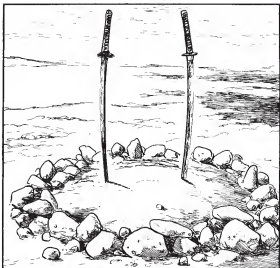


ABANDONING
FAMILY,

ABANDONING
FEALTY,

ACCEPTING
PAIN.

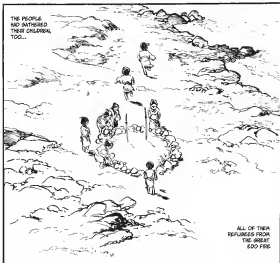








THE PEOPLE
HAD ENTERED
THEIR CHILDREN,
TOO...



ALL OF THEM
REFUGEES FROM
THE GREAT
EDO FIRE

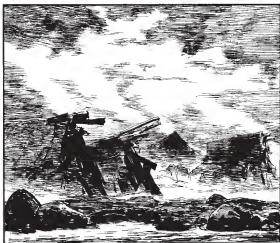


FIVE DAYS SINCE
THE INFERNAL, THEIR
SPIRITS REAISED,
THEY JOINED HANDS
TO SURVIVE THE
RECONSTRUCTION.





FATHER AND
SON WERE
THERE.







NOW
THERE WERE
TEARS HERE,
LAUGHTER
AND SWEAT,
AFTER.



THE AMAZING
STRENGTH OF
THE COMMON MAN—
SPRINGING BACK
TO THEIR FEET,
GRASPING WITH ALL
THEIR MIGHT.



AND THE
FATHER AND
SON WERE
THERE.



IT WAS A GIFT...
THE WAY OF HARMONY,
VISITED FOR A FLEETING
MOMENT UPON A FATHER
AND SON TRAPPED IN
ANIMOSITY, A LAND
BEYOND HOPE.











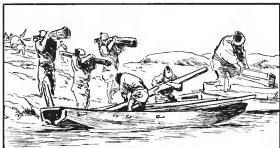




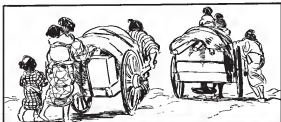




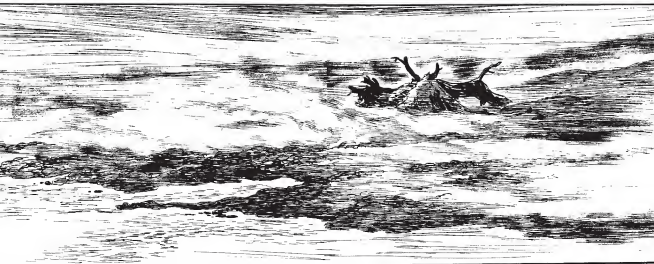










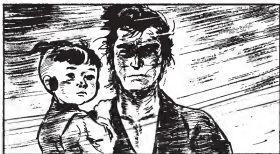
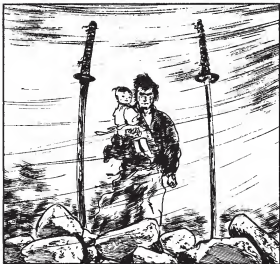


AND THEN
THEY WERE GONE
AND THE FATHER
AND SON WERE
STILL THERE.



THE WAY
OF MANKIND
DREW
DISTANT.

FATHER AND SON,
THEY STOOD AGAIN
IN ANIMATED...
THE WAY OF THE
WARRIOR.

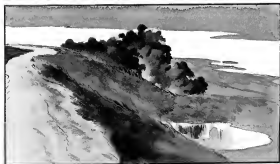




*the hundred and
thirty-sixth*

Battle's Eye

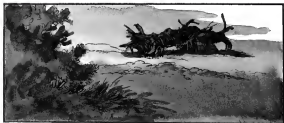


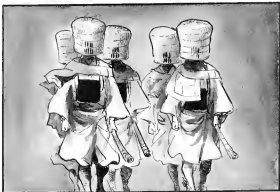


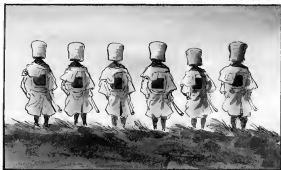










































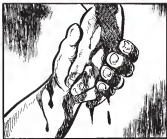














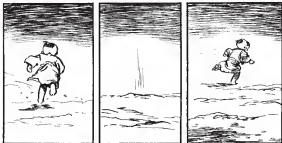


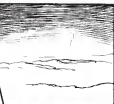








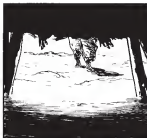






























YASHŪ
GRABS...



KUZŌZAKI
WATCHES...



BE READY,
DISCORD.
HERE COMES
THE DAWN...



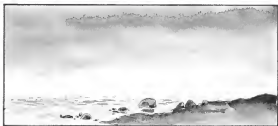
*the hundred and
thirty-seventh*

Grasses That Never Flower







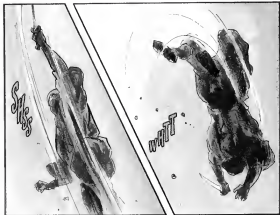


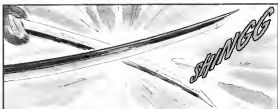












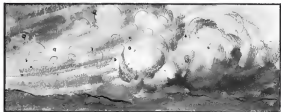


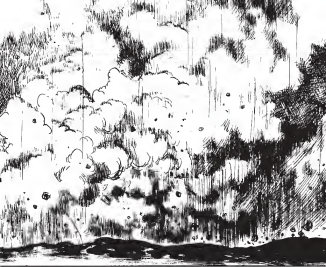














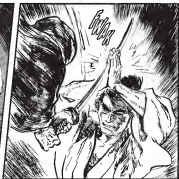










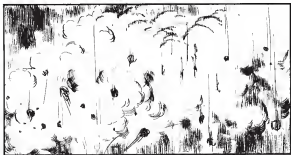






















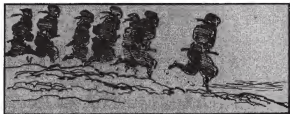




HE'S DEAD LIST!
WE CAN'T GET
HIM IF HIDDEN IN
THE RIVERS!

YOU TWO,
FUSHI HIM OUT!
THE REST OF YOU,
BE READY TO JUMP!
LIGHT YOUR FUSES
IN JUMP-ARY!

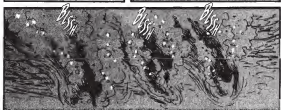
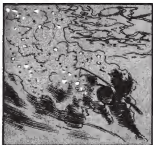




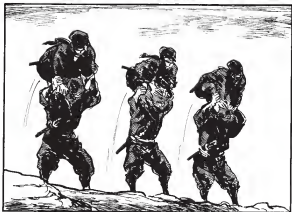










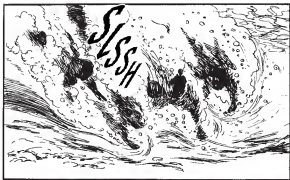


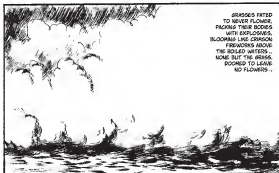












GRASSIES FITTED
TO NEVER FLOWER,
PACKING THEIR BODIES
WITH EXPLOSIVES,
BLOOMING LIKE CRIMSON
FIREWORKS ABOVE
THE BOILED WATERS...
NONE BUT THE GRASS,
DOOMED TO LEAVE
NO FLOWERS...

LONE WOLF AND SUB BOOM TWENTY SEVEN, THE END
TO BE CONTINUED

GLOSSARY

bakshaku

The government. The shōgun, his councilors, and his senior officials

bugyo

A position combining the post of mayor and chief of police for a town, in charge of administration, maintaining the peace, and enforcing the law. Rule was extended only to commoners

bushi

A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

bushido

The way of the warrior. Also known as *shinō*.

dōtanuki

A battle sword. Literally “sword that cuts through torsos.”

Edo

Edo was a castle town, that rose up around the moats and ramparts of Bōo castle, the stronghold of the Tokugawa clan. The central core of the city, administered by the *machi-bugyō* city commissioners, who reported directly to the shōgun’s senior councilors, and was demarcated on official maps by a black line, the *kurodōji*, and was called the *go-furtei*.

go-rōjū

Inner circle of councilors directly advising the shōgun (“go” is used as an honorific term).

han

A feudal domain.

honorifics

Japan is a class and status society, and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes *o* and *go*, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Love Hōjō and Cui*:

donno – archaic; used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures.

san – the most common, used among equals or near-equals.

sama – used for superiors.

sensei – used for teachers, masters, respected entertainers, and politicians.

kōgi kaishakunin

The shōgun’s own second, who performed executions ordered by the shōgun.

kusa

Grass. In this case, the term refers to the secret ninja living normal lives and serving as spies in towns across Japan, thriving as grass in a field. They serve Yagyu Retsudō and send reports back to Edo.

machi-bugyō

The Edo city commissioner, combining the post of mayor and chief of police. A post held in monthly rotation by two senior Tokugawa vassals, in charge of administration, maintaining the peace, and enforcing the law in Edo. Their rule extended only to commoners; samurai in Edo were controlled by their own *daimyō* and his officers. The *machi-bugyō* had an administrative staff and a small force of armed policemen at his disposal.

meifumadō

The Buddhist Hell. The way of demons and damnation.

ryū

Often translated as “school.” The many variations of swordsmanship and other martial arts were passed down from generation to generation to the offspring of the originator of the technique or set of techniques, and to any *deshi* students that sought to learn from the master. The largest schools had their own *dōjō* training centers and scores of students. An effective swordsman had to study the different techniques of the various schools to know how to block them in combat. Many *ryū* also had a set of special, secret techniques that were only taught to school initiates.

ryūsei

The *shōgun* and his family.

shidō

Bushidō. The way of the warrior.

shihai

Master.

shinobi

A generic term for ninja, meaning “one who moves in secrecy.” Ninja had their heyday in the time of warring states before the rise of the Tokugawa clan. Originally mercenaries serving different warlords, by the Edo period they were in the service of the central government. The most famous shinobi were the ninja of Iga and Kaga, north of Kyoto. The *Kurokawa* that appear in *Low Wolf* and *Cat* were officially the laborers and manual workers in Edo Castle. Whether they truly served as a secret spy corps is lost in history.

shishu

Defending and protecting to the death.

KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Love Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talent.

Love Wolf and Cub was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kazure Okami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and reprinted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1973, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Anzame* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryōichi Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gekiga Senjuku*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Batman 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear: "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.



GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-shibubai*, or “paper-play” narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashi-iae* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashi-iae* readers.

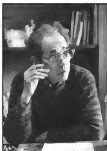
In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Dojinki*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series.

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Great*

Okami (*Great Wolf and Cub*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the “golden duo” and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.



THE RONIN REPORT

By Tim Ervin-Gore

Lone Wolf and Cub in Film (continued from volume 10)

Note: This is not a review, but a discussion piece. If you haven't seen this movie yet, read only the first two paragraphs. The rest might spoil your movie-watching experience.

As previously discussed in volume 10, the translation of comic books to film can be a challenging prospect. Though the two mediums share many similarities, there are undeniable and strong differences as well. In many ways, a comic book is much like a storyboard for a film. In fact, many comic-book artists do storyboard work for filmmakers on the side. It's a natural fit. And few comic-book artists have been as adept at bringing the visual elements of cinematography into the comics page as *Lone Wolf and Cub* artist Gosicki Kojima.

Two years after *Lone Wolf and Cub* began its monthly serialization, the first of what would amount to six films ran on theater screens across Japan. This series of films would join a wide array of media based on the manga masterpiece, but the series, known in America as the "Babycart" series, had a leg up on the television shows and other films. With screenplays by Kazuo Koike himself, stoic acting from the popular samurai star Wakayama Tomisaburo as Ōgami Ittō, a perfect Daigoro performed by Akihito Tomikawa, and lush, contemplative cinematography, the *Babycart* series had many elements that helped the *Lone Wolf and Cub* manga make the leap onto the silver screen.

In volume 10, the first film of the series, *Sword of Vengeance*, was discussed. In that piece we touched on the fact that the movie was comprised of numerous disparate scenes from the manga strung together to touch on many plot and character points while moving the story quickly through the limited space of a standard-length film. In this essay, we'll be covering four movies and concluding this study, so for extra insight, see volume 10.

The third movie of the series, titled *Babycart to Hades* is immediately noticeable in its reference to the manga. Ōgami and Daigoro are boarding a skiff to

travel down a river, and a girl drops her bundle in the water. Little Daigoro fishes it out with a stick, and the reader knows that the chapter entitled "The Virgin and the Whore" (*UW&C* Vol. 3) has been set to film. It's pretty impressive how well the movie follows elements of this story, right down to the salt on the prostitution-bound girl's travel-weary feet. However, before everyone gets to the inn, yet another chapter from *Love Wolf and Cub* is interspersed. Chapter 46, "Wandering Samurai" (Vol. 9) unfolds on the road to the inn. In this chapter, *watari-kachi*, temporary retainers, journey to another han for another job, with intent to rape the first attractive ladies they see. In the manga, Ōgami has a duel with an honorable *watari-kachi*, and of course kills him. But in order to keep the character alive for later use, the director allows Ōgami to spare the man. This is interesting, because it seems unlikely that he would do so, but one understands after watching a few of these films that sometimes a plot point, even a likely action, must change in order to create an effective and entertaining movie.

Now, back to the inn. Soon a well-cast and very pretty Torizo shows up to claim the girl and exact revenge for killing her *yogen* (procurer). It should be mentioned that once again, the direction, set, and script are amazingly accurate with the original manga. Even the action is superbly directed, and the story plays out well. However, at the end of "The Virgin and the Whore," Ōgami hacks the heads off of a set of dolls, but in the movie version, they keep the story moving by having Torizo ask for an assassination herself. This is where the movie strays from the storyline and never bothers to go back. Some political wrangling happens, the story steals a snippet from yet another story, and eventually, Ōgami is faced by a large army. Here's where the film loses a little credibility: Ōgami relies heavily on guns. Not only does he use the gun in the cart, which has been changed into a machine gun, but he kills numerous soldiers with a pair of revolvers. Revolvers! Such technology didn't exist then, and neither did machine guns, but of course movies are about suspension of disbelief, right? In this case, the director is asking a lot from the faithful reader watching the movie, and Ōgami's character is largely degraded by this trespass. However, from another perspective, the guns seem like a play on American western films by adding a little shoot-'em-up to the mix, and there are lots of comparisons between samurai films and westerns in the history of cinematography.

In the fourth film of the series, *Babycart in Peril* (actual title — *Heart of the Parent, Heart of the Child*, sound familiar? see Vol. 1), the reader will be pleased to find a few classic stories woven together. Basically, the full text of "Performer" (Vol. 4), plays out through the film, but while the story moves, we are treated to another great story from volume 4, "Parting Frost," where little Daigoro escapes certain death by burying himself in the mud amidst

a raging grass fire. However, the samurai who notices Daigoro's *shishōgan* eyes ends up being Gunbei Yagyū, and we're also treated to the flashback scene from "The Infinite Path" (Vol. 8), where Itō becomes the *kashikawan* by default. It's interesting to see how the scenes and characters are tied together to push the storyline while feeding readers a healthy dose of what they remember reading, albeit sometimes oddly out of order. Things start to go awry again when Itō decides to spare Gunbei after besting him, but that's more than made up for if you like gore, because soon after there's a ninja fight scene in a temple that features limbs being hacked off and flying everywhere, gallons of squirting blood, and a couple of appendage-less torsos wriggling around on the floor. It's a little much, as often in these films there are choices to linger on more sensational subjects, namely blood and boobies. In a way, American audiences should relate to this, since Western films also take low roads in order to entertain a lesser common denominator. That being said, it's important to view these films as entertainment more than art. The film concludes with a familiar big battle scene, but this time Itō is up against a Yagyū army using more rifles. Ōgami even throws a few hand grenades into the fray. Once again, the direction opts for sensational scenes.

The fifth film, *Babycart in the Land of Demons*, or simply *Meifumado*, is an example of how confusing it can be to try to mix too much into one recipe. The basis for this film is a combination of the "Castle of Women" story in volume 13, and the story "Kyūshū Road," from volume 14, plus "Shattered Stones," from volume 12. If that's not confusing enough, they also throw in elements of "The Gateless Barrier" (Vol. 2), and "Penal Code Article Seventy-Nine" (Vol. 7). Of course, naming titles doesn't say much. In "Castle of Women," the lord of a *han* attempts to deceive the shōgun into believing his daughter is a boy so she can be the rightful heir to the clan. In "Kyūshū Road," you have face mask-wearing spear fighters and a *han* official trying to elevate his prospects by killing Itō. In "Shattered Stones," you've got a former samurai avenging his wife's leaving him to be a *han* lord's concubine, and the girl child is tied into that story as well. Mix those three parts and you have the general basis for the story, but then there are other elements. The priest from "Gateless Barrier" is in there, but he's corrupt and Itō kills him in an absurd manner. And Daigoro has his own little side adventure covering for a pickpocket from the "Penal Code" story. Actually, the section of the movie based on this story shines on its own and is the best part of this film. It's very faithfully done, and Akihiro Tamikawa perfects Daigoro's character. That scene almost saves the film, but the confusion is too much to overcome. Once again we have a big battle at the end of the movie, and in an unprecedented move, Ōgami leaves the fray, letting the Kuroda clan (the masked, spear-wielding warriors) do his fighting for him. It's certainly an odd way to end the film.

The sixth and final film in the series is also, unfortunately, the worst. Entitled *White Heaven In Hell*, the film certainly has its positive points, but the obvious sensationalism thrown into the plot can be a little distracting. *White Heaven In Hell* starts strong, jumping straight into the “Sayaka” story from volume 16. In this story a Yagyū daughter uses the *ō-tokusa* (juggling dagger) fighting style, and it allows for plenty of gore right off the bat. Of course, Sayaka falls victim to Ōgami’s blade, the opening credits roll, and soon after, so does the head of the faithful *Low Wolf and Cub* reader. Before cutting into the meat of the main plot, there’s a scene where Ittō and Daigoro visit the grave of Ittō’s wife (Daigoro’s mother) and the sanctimony of the scene is broken when Ittō grabs the babycart and shoots machine gun bullets into a wall. Suddenly, a quartet of what might be ninja fall out of the plaster in the wall. It feels a tad ridiculous, and though I could imagine a standard moviegoer being entertained by the concept of a ninja sealing himself into a wall, it’s still rather odd.

The theme of oddness continues in this film as the story takes a turn to the mystical. The central plot of this film attempts to combine the story “The Moon in the East, the Sun in the West” (Vol. 13) with ideas from “Incense for the Living,” plus the tactics from “Five Wheels of the Yagyū,” both from volume 15, but not connected in context. The glue for these disparate chunks is a mysticism based on the living incense ceremony of the *yama metsuke*. However, instead of burying one man for a few hours, they bury three men for forty-five days, turning them into zombie-like warriors who can burrow into the earth. This is an entertaining addition, but it’s a little too unbelievable to enjoy thoroughly.

What most misrepresents the integrity of the series is how Yagyū is treated at the end of the series. I don’t want to blow it for anyone, but this “final” movie in no way reflects how the manga ends. In fact, watching the end of this video, one might realize that even though a lot of familiar scenes pass before the viewer’s eyes, it’s not really a fair representation of the manga. In fact, the differences between the *Low Wolf and Cub* movies and manga are distinct enough to be considered separate stories, and the serious *Low Wolf* reader will best approach the films as light entertainment instead of expecting the profound, weighty moral tale that comes from reading through the manga. After all, the two mediums, though similar in a few ways, are very different in how they work and the economy of production, and one should never expect a film to completely translate something previously in book form, even if it’s a comic book. Let go of what you thought was important and enjoy these films for what they are — campy, bloody, sexy, and oddly beautiful — instead of what you’d expect them to be.



2002 HARVEY AWARD WINNER

■ BEST AMERICAN EDITION OF
FOREIGN MATERIAL

■ BEST GRAPHIC ALBUM OF
PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED
MATERIAL

Two swords remain planted in the ground, awaiting the final duel between the conniving Retsudo and the vengeful Ito, two samurai locked in a struggle of vengeance. Little wolf cub Daigoro guards the two blades with his life. Indeed, his life is threatened when a stampede of villagers escaping a burning village almost plow him into the dirt. However, impressed townsfolk decide to stop and help him, staying for a while on the same beach. For once, Daigoro experiences the joy of being a child, playing with the other children, but that peace won't last long. Yagyu Retsudo, imprisoned in the castle of the shogun, deceives his way to freedom and commands the very last members of the Yagyu ninja to kill Ito!

"Koske and Kajima taught me to use weather to create mood, and how effective a long, wordless sequence can be. I'm positive that this emphasis on visual storytelling has contributed to the international popularity of Lone Wolf and Cub."

— Kyle Baker, *Cartoonist*

You Are Here, King David, Why I Hate Saturn

Published for the first time in America in
the Japanese format.



Front cover artwork by
GUY DAVIS with
VINCE LOCKE

子連れ狼